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CHILDREN LIVING IN THEIR OWN HOMES

social services
provided through
child welfare programs

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through child welfare programs

by **ANNIE LEE DAVIS**
consultant on social services to children
living in their own homes

FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY • Social Security Administration
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foreword

OVER FORTY YEARS AGO, in 1909, the first White House Conference on the care of dependent children was called by President Theodore Roosevelt. Men and women came from every State in the Union to this conference.

In a special message to Congress on February 15, 1909,[1] President Roosevelt said: "Each of these children represents either a potential addition to the productive capacity and the enlightened citizenship of the Nation, or, if allowed to suffer from neglect, a potential addition to the destructive forces of the community. . . . The interests of the Nation are involved in the welfare of this army of children no less than in our great material affairs.

"Notwithstanding a wide diversity of views and methods represented in the conference, and notwithstanding the varying legislative enactments and policies of the States from which the members came, the conference, at the close of its sessions, unanimously adopted a series of declarations expressing the conclusions which they had reached. These constitute a wise, constructive, and progressive programme of child-caring work. If given full effect by the proper agencies, existing methods and practices in almost every community would be profoundly and advantageously modified."

The keynote of the conference was expressed in these words: "Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons."

Many of the recommendations made at that conference have been put into effect and much progress has been made in the care and treatment of children. Mothers' pensions, the forerunner of our present aid-to-dependent-children program; public assistance; aid to the permanently and totally disabled; the insurance programs have been developed and have assured income to families with the result that during periods of loss of family income, many children are able to

[1] Proceedings of the Conference on the Care of Dependent Children. Held at Washington, D. C., January 25, 26, 1909. Congress of the United States, Senate Document No. 721. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1909. 231 pp. (p. 5).

remain in their own homes with their own parents. Programs of foster family care have been greatly expanded for children whose own homes have broken down. Large congregate institutions with their regimented type of care are gradually being replaced by the cottage plan so that more children may have close, personal relationships with cottage parents.

But despite these developments we have not yet fully achieved the implications of that far-reaching conference. Although the people engaged in the field of child welfare agreed in 1909 that "home life is the highest and finest product of civilization," we have lagged far behind in making this a reality for many children. The great gap in the field of child welfare lies in providing skilled help to parents and children when necessary so that parents are better able to give the care their children need and thus strengthen and maintain family life for them.

In order to prevent family breakdown, every effort should be made by child welfare agencies to safeguard the child's own home so long as it contributes to his welfare. Social services that help parents and children improve their relationships to each other and with other family members, that help parents in understanding and providing the care and protection their children need, that seek to improve community conditions and develop resources for the benefit of children and their parents, contribute to the preservation of home life for children.

The purpose of this publication is to set forth the range of social services that should be available in each community through child welfare programs to help parents in their task of child rearing and thus strengthen family life. Children living in their own homes who may be in need of social services are identified. The variety of social services required is described.

This publication is intended primarily for administrators, staff, boards, and advisory committees of public and voluntary child welfare agencies who have responsibility for developing programs and providing services for children living in their own homes. Community agencies, particularly Councils of Social Agencies, will find it valuable in assessing community needs and gaps in social services designed to improve family living for children. Civic groups that want to understand more about what social services for children are will find this a useful tool. Juvenile courts, State training schools, and agencies providing day-care services will find it useful in developing social services for children in their care. School administrators and teachers in elementary and secondary schools including nursery schools, health personnel, recreation workers and many people in other fields will find material here that will help them know what

social services are or should be available in the community for children living in their own homes; how to work more closely and effectively with child welfare workers; and how to take part in planning services.

The author of this publication is Mrs. Annie Lee Davis, consultant on social services to children living in their own homes. To all members of the Bureau staff who reviewed this document and gave the benefit of their comments, the Children's Bureau expresses sincere thanks.

Martha M. Eliot

Martha M. Eliot, M. D.
Chief, Children's Bureau

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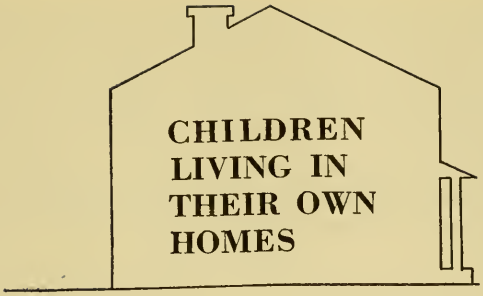

social services provided through child welfare programs

IN OUR SOCIETY the family is the basic social institution. It is the birthright of every child to be born to parents who love and care for him, to live with his family in a home that shields and protects him. Parents have the right and the responsibility for the care, protection, and guidance of their children.

A child has the best chance for a good start in life in a family with parents who are reasonably mature, healthy, and understanding of their children's needs. The effect of the relationship between infants and young children and their parents, especially the mother or mother substitute, on the development of personality has been demonstrated in the studies made by research workers in various fields and from different countries. In the main these studies were made of children who were deprived of their parents' care in infancy and early childhood through complete separation from them. Also these children were without the continuous love and care of one person who served as a mother substitute. The unfavorable effects on the child's personality development of the loss of the mother's love, care, and attention now appear to be established. The continuous care of relatively mature, understanding, loving parents is essential for the child's healthy growth. Although present knowledge indicates that the lack of loving care is most decisive during infancy and early childhood, such deprivation means damage to the child's healthy growth throughout his childhood and adolescence.

From their own experiences in the placement and supervision of children in foster care, child welfare workers know the importance of the child's own parents to his happiness and sense of security. No

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plan of foster care, however adequate, can be a complete substitute for the child's own home and family. Physical separation of the child from his parents through foster placement does not mean that psychological ties have been broken. Children who cling to parents who neglect and mistreat them are known to every child welfare worker. No matter how "bad" the parent may be as measured by the usual standards, children often protect and defend them. Frequently, these parents have a capacity for warm feelings, total acceptance, and a relaxed manner with the child—values which cannot be wholly replaced. Conversely the home rich in material comforts, with high moral standards, may be lacking in warmth and understanding and as a consequence be damaging to the child.

At the National Conference of Social Work in 1950, Lester Granger of the National Urban League pointed this out movingly when he said "It is not privation that distorts personality growth, but neglect. There is a toughness about young people that goes beyond the ordinary understanding of the self-contented adult and carries with ease a kind of suffering that older people will go to any length to avoid. Hunger, cold, lack of material possessions, and exclusion from personal comforts—these are by no means the worst that can happen to children. The worst that can happen is to be afraid, to be unwanted—to be shunted aside with callous indifference in the quest for what every child wants and should have—safety and fun."[2] Child welfare workers also know from experience that most children in foster care want to return to their own homes and their own parents no matter how inadequate they may be. The experience of child welfare workers, foster parents, house parents, and others who work with children in foster care substantiate the findings of scientific investigations.

The parental function is to help the child develop within himself the capacity for self acceptance, responsiveness to other people, and the ability to deal on a realistic basis with his own problems and situations that arise in the course of living. This inner development is a continuous process, unfolding in successive stages throughout childhood and adolescence and on into maturity. Community programs for the benefit of children, such as health and medical services, education, recreation, religion, social services, are aids to parents in carrying out their parental responsibilities. But parents, themselves, have the major responsibility in child rearing. Community programs can help them with their task; they cannot do the task for them. Parents lay the foundation and set the pattern for the child's unfolding innerself.

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[2] Granger, Lester B.: Children's Agencies and Today's Family. Child Welfare, 30: No. 2, 3–6, February 1951.

Parents do this by the way in which they perform the ordinary day by day tasks of caring for the child. Parents must be able to love and express their love overtly. The smiling face, the warm gentle voice, the fondling touch as the mother feeds, bathes, dresses, picks her baby up, or puts him to bed, all convey her love, and make the child feel safe and happy. His own feelings of contentment and happiness break through as he smiles and laughs, coos and gurgles, and waves his arms and legs in response. Two things happen. The child grows physically through this exercise of his large muscles. He grows emotionally as he first experiences the warm human relationships that form the basis of his future social relationships. It has been aptly expressed that "the baby who does not get loving attention, retreats from the world as a disappointing place." [3]

Not only do infants and young children suffer when they do not receive loving care and attention from their parents, but this is true for children at every stage of growth from infancy to maturity. The child needs, indeed must have, the help, support, and guidance of parents who love and get pleasure out of caring for him. The comforting by parents when the child is distressed or hurt; the bedtime story and the goodnight kiss; the opportunities given to the child to do things for himself in keeping with his stage of development; the setting of limits that permit him to have fun yet not to get into trouble; the patience shown in answering his avalanche of questions; the confidence shown in respecting his ideas and providing him with opportunities to make decisions in keeping with his abilities; the understanding and support provided when he seeks to free himself from his parents and gain independence—all these are ways parents supply the help, support, and guidance their children need to grow in health and in happiness.

Many children do not have this "best" chance for healthy growth and development. For various reasons some are separated from their parents and deprived of parental care. Others, though living in their own homes with their own parents, fail to receive the loving care and guidance which is the foundation of their health and happiness.

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[3] Quoted from unpublished speech by Helen Ross, Director, Institute for Psychoanalysis, Chicago, Ill., *Play as a Function of Childhood* given at the workshop on Social Work with Children in Their Own Homes at the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration, July 10, 1952.

Parents fail in this fundamental parental function for many reasons. Chief among these is the fact that in their own upbringing, parents have not experienced the stable, mature, and loving care conducive to inner peace and happiness. It is an age-old truth that he who has not experienced love, cannot give it. Because of their own unmet needs and strivings, parents whose personalities have been warped, frequently thwart the healthy development of their children. In this way the vicious circle of distorted personality growth is perpetuated.

Other things prevent parents from carrying out this most important parental function. They lack understanding of children's needs and how children grow; they are ill physically or mentally; they are not happy in their relationship with each other; they are worried and anxious over loss of income or insufficient income; they come home physically exhausted from long hours of work that is neither stimulating nor satisfying; the mother is employed outside of the home and this robs her of the time and patience to devote to the children. All of these situations can interfere with the parents' ability to provide the patient, understanding, loving care their children need and to derive pleasure from it.

If what we know now about personality development were put into practice, present programs for the benefit of children and their parents would be revolutionized and many new programs would be established. We have made, and are making, many gains in medical care of children, in education, in religion, and in social welfare. But these gains, important as they are, are not enough. For many children, services do not reach them at all; for others they are inadequate; for still others they are provided too late.

A democracy where the source of its strength and virility comes from the quality of its people cannot afford to allow one child to lack opportunities for his fullest growth. Insofar as possible, every child must have the opportunity that ensures the best chance for his development—that is in his own home with parents who understand him, love him, and are able to provide him with the care and guidance that he needs. Present-day knowledge of children's needs and good child-rearing practices should be easily accessible to all parents and available in such a way that it becomes incorporated into their thinking and feeling. The all-important task of child rearing can no longer be left to chance.

The welfare of a child, in its broadest sense, includes all of the things that contribute to his health, growth, and development; whatever strengthens family life contributes to the child's welfare. Sustained, adequate family income, health protection and medical care, good housing, education, religion, social services underpin stable

family living and contribute to the welfare of children. Education, health, religion, recreation, social welfare, and law enforcement and the courts have specific responsibilities for building strong families, for protecting the family, and for safeguarding the rights of parents and children.

Child Welfare Programs Provide Social Services to Children Living in Their Own Homes

THE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION of social work to children living in their own homes is the help that it provides to parents and children through social services designed to strengthen family life. These social services range from helping people through such tangible ways as giving financial assistance in such a manner that the dignity and self respect of the individual and his family are safeguarded and promoted to providing help with such intangibles as emotional conflicts growing out of unsatisfactory relationships.

These services are provided by established agencies, public and voluntary, whose major responsibility is to give help that enables the individual to deal realistically with his social situation and to achieve results that are satisfying. These agencies comprise the social welfare field. Social services are also provided by social work staff in agencies whose major responsibility is in some field other than social services.

Many agencies outside of the social welfare field give social services that enhance family life for children. Social services to children living in their own homes are given by psychiatric social workers in child guidance and mental health clinics. Social workers employed by the public schools help many of these children. Medical social workers in the maternal and child health program and the program for crippled children, in hospitals, and in other medical settings provide social services to these children. Many children coming before the courts remain in their own homes and receive social services from probation departments or probation staff attached to the courts.

A variety of agencies within the social welfare field have programs and services that help to maintain and to improve family life for children. Public assistance, family service, combined family and children's, and child welfare agencies—all promote good family living for children.

This pamphlet deals with the social services provided through child welfare programs to children living in their own homes. Child welfare programs include those agencies in the social welfare field whose major responsibility is giving care to children and social services to or for their benefit. Child welfare programs do not include income maintenance programs although in some instances these are for the specific benefit of children.

The objective of child welfare programs is to provide those social services and facilities that will safeguard and promote the healthy growth of children to the greatest extent possible. The best way to ensure healthy growth and development is in the child's own home with parents adequate for the task of child rearing. This does not mean, of course, that the child's own home is the best place for him no matter how inadequate it is. But it does mean that every attempt should be made to salvage the home and to help the parents grow in their understanding, care, and guidance of their children. For some children the home cannot be salvaged. Their best chance for healthy growth is through skillfully determined plans for foster placement or adoption. But safeguarding, promoting, strengthening, and maintaining good family living for children should be the base of child welfare programs from which all other services spring and to which they return.

Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. Too often the services in child welfare programs have been concentrated on foster care and adoption of children. Too frequently foster care has been an end in itself. Children have not returned to the home base. At the present time child welfare agencies are growing in their awareness of their responsibility to safeguard, protect, and promote life for the child in his own home. This is being expressed through: A more careful consideration of the possibilities of improving the home before taking steps to remove children from it; work with parents during foster placement; earlier return of the child to his own home; the development of programs of homemaker services to keep children in their own homes during emergencies caused by the mother's illness or death; and the provision of direct services to children living in their own homes and to their parents.

The provision for child welfare services under the Social Security Act stimulated the development of State and local public social services for children and made it possible to strengthen and extend the services that were in existence prior to the passage of the act. In

many of the rural areas where child welfare services have been developed, social services to children living in their own homes are provided.

The legal restriction of the Federal grant-in-aid program to rural areas and areas of special need, the limitation of Federal, State, and local funds, and the lack of qualified staff have hindered the development of these services for thousands of children living in their own homes who need such services. Also, State and local public social welfare programs for children established prior to the Social Security Act were largely foster-care programs and the extension of these programs to include social services for children living in their own homes has been slow.

Many voluntary children's agencies with the exception of children's protective agencies also have limited their programs to foster care and adoption of children. As a consequence of all of these conditions affecting both voluntary and public child welfare agencies, the development of social services for children living in their own homes through child welfare programs is spotty throughout the country. No community has developed a well-rounded program of social services to meet the variety of needs of children living in their own homes. Most communities have some services on which to base such a program. Social services that seek out whatever the strengths are in families in trouble, and enable parents and children to use and build upon these strengths inevitably reduce the number of children who must be cared for away from their own homes.

Social services to children living in their own homes through child welfare programs are the help that is provided by child welfare workers to enable parents and children to live more happily with themselves, with each other, with other family members and with their neighbors; to have useful, productive, and satisfying lives; and to deal successfully with the situations and conditions with which they are confronted. Programs have two basic purposes. One is to promote and safeguard adequate care and guidance for all children within their own families. The other is to provide when needed those social services and other special services to children and their parents so that family relationships are improved and family life is strengthened.

Whether the objective of the social services provided is to promote and safeguard healthy development of all children or to give help after difficulties have developed, the child is the center of concern, even though in the majority of instances, direct work with parents is necessary. Specific knowledge of children and their needs gained through professional social work education that includes direct relationships with children are required in rendering these services. The child

welfare worker especially trained to deal with the problems of children works with parents and through many kinds of community services, agencies, and institutions in helping parents meet the needs of their children. They work with child guidance clinics, schools, health departments, recreation and character-building agencies, and religious groups.

The centering of concern on the child does not mean that parents' needs, desires, or problems are overlooked. They cannot be for they are inextricably woven into the parent-child relationship and the child's social milieu. Therefore, parents' needs and desires, abilities, and limitations are—and must be—taken into account and dealt with, if the child's situation is to be improved. But the basis of agency service and the focus of help are determined by the fact that the child is reacting unfavorably to the situation in the family and the request for help is for his benefit. Consequently, these services are specialized social services for children based on knowledge of their growth, development, and needs; and on the skills of the worker in the use of this knowledge for the benefit of children and their parents.

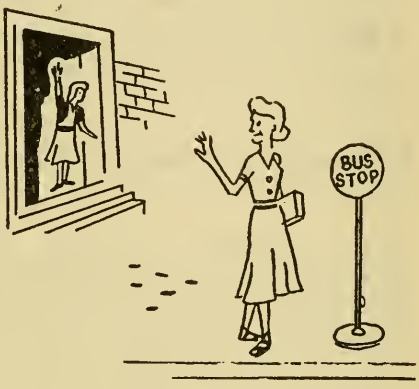
Obviously the problems and services described here are not the exclusive responsibility of the child welfare field nor of the field of social work. Some of the services are provided to some parents and children by educational, health, and mental health agencies. It is hoped, however, that agencies in the child welfare field, public and voluntary, will recognize their responsibility for these children, cooperate with others in the community to know what services are available, and develop social services for those children and their parents who need them.

Obstacles to Healthy Growth of Children Living in Their Own Homes

ALL CHILDREN and their families are affected by the pressures, tensions, and insecurities caused by rapid social changes. Increased scientific knowledge in all fields, improved methods of and increased opportunities for communication of ideas and knowledge, technological developments, rapid means of travel are changing the way of life for urban and rural children and their families. We have moved

rapidly from a rural economy where the family was nearly self-sufficient in supplying its needs to an interdependent society in which all families, to some extent, must depend on others for basic necessities. Technological changes are affecting farms and factories, making it necessary for families to move from one geographical area to another, and wage earners to learn new skills or seek other fields of employment. War and preparations for war, the increase in child population, more families and children moving from one community to another, have heightened the insecurities and tensions in individuals and families.

The Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor reports that the number of women employed outside of the home has increased steadily since the First World War. Many women who took advantage of the opportunities offered for employment during the war, did not return to their homes when the war was over. Many are mothers with young children.



Planning to meet these fundamental changes in our culture has lagged. Our sense of values that gives stability, meaning, and purpose to living have not fully evolved. These uncertainties and insecurities are reflected to more or less degree within families. Difficulties within families that affect children adversely and difficulties within children themselves are not confined to any economic or social group. They know no economic or social barriers.

Along with these social changes has come greater awareness of what is happening to families and individuals. The results of scientific study of human growth and development are being widely disseminated. The great interest in mental health and in what is needed to promote it is manifest in many segments of the population. Parents, teachers, social workers, ministers, doctors, nurses, and others are more sensitive to children's emotional needs than was the case several decades ago. Behavior in children that parents a generation ago considered "cute" or inconsequential, "She'll grow out of it"—is now being looked at thoughtfully. Parents want to know if this behavior is normal for the child's stage of growth or is it a symptom of deeper trouble that needs attention now? Social services have a unique contribution to make to children and their parents who are caught in the meshes of the rapidly moving but uncoordinated parts of our society.

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Children living in their own homes for whom social services should be available are: all children whose parents want help for any reason—information, assurance, or difficulties in relation to the child; children who request help on their own behalf; those whose behavior indicates difficulty either in parent-child or community relationships; those who are neglected, abused, or subjected to demoralizing influences; those suffering from chronic or long-time illness and physical handicaps; those with mental handicaps; those who need substitute parental care for a substantial part of the day; those who need help because of illness in the home, hospitalization, or death of the mother; and those who are returned to their own homes from foster care.

What are the problems that cause these children and their parents to be in need of social services?

Difficulties recognized by parents

Not all parents who request help are experiencing difficulty in the care of their children. Parents sometimes wish information about the availability of such resources as summer camps or other recreational or leisure-time activities, educational help such as classes for remedial reading, health resources, and others.

Some relatively mature parents may wish to be reassured in their task of child rearing. Is my child's behavior to be expected at his stage of development? Is my child retarded in his development? Is this behavior specific to my child or do all children go through this phase? These are some of the questions asked. For example, a university professor and his wife were disturbed because their only child, age 2, "was so selfish." She would not share her toys or possessions with other children even though she was happily playing with one toy while the playmate had another. The parents had tried very hard to correct this and had even resorted to shaming and punishing the child. These parents only needed to understand that this behavior is natural and to be expected of a child at this stage of development and that sharing must be learned and will come more easily at a later stage.

Some parents are disturbed because of the unhappy relationship between the child and one parent. These parents, and perhaps the child, need help in understanding what is happening and how to deal with it.

Parents more frequently seek help because of behavior of the child that is disturbing to them. More parents would seek help, and seek it earlier, if they knew where to go for help or reassurance.

Difficulties recognized by children and youth

It is usually in adolescence that children are able to recognize their need for help and seek it outside of their families. Young people in this stage of their development are beginning to form attachments outside of the family and seeking independence from their parents. This is also the period of hero worship. Adolescents may turn for help to teachers or to other adults whom they admire. Some come to social agencies frequently because of previous satisfying experiences they or their families have had with a specific social worker. This is particularly true of those young people who have had experience in foster care. Although their adjustment after return to their own homes is satisfactory and the agency is no longer giving service, these young people frequently return to the worker for help and advice on their own behalf. More young people would come to social agencies if they knew that help was available and had confidence that they would be accepted and understood.

The problems that they bring vary in terms of the individual. Some are disturbed because of the unsatisfactory relationship between themselves and their parents. For example, an adolescent girl came to a child welfare agency for help in making a decision whether or not to stay on at home and try to get along with her father with whom she was having difficulty.

Young people frequently want help in relation to the differences in the standard of conduct expected of them by their parents and by their associates. How late the young person is permitted to stay out at night is frequently a point of controversy. Driving the family car, dating, manner and style of dress, choice of friends, are subjects that frequently cause concern for parents and youth.

Some adolescents want information about community resources for vocational training, recreation or leisure-time activities. Others want help in making decisions to stay in school or take a job. Unmarried pregnant girls frequently request help for themselves.

Behavior problems

Children show their distress through their behavior. Inability to make friends or get along well with other children, persistent lying, stealing, fretfulness and irritability, extreme shyness and fearfulness, failure in school when the child has normal ability, destructiveness and extreme cruelty—all indicate that the child needs help. All children exhibit such behavior to a more or less degree. The danger signs lie in the extremeness and the persistency of the behavior.

Children with behavior problems include those who come to the attention of the police and the courts. Adolescent unmarried mothers living in their own homes, or who could remain in or return to their own homes with the help of social services, and unmarried fathers are also included.

Conflict in the parent-child relationship

Much of the unacceptable behavior of children arises from difficulties in the parent-child relationship. Problems in this area may not only be evident in the child's behavior, but also they may be seen in the parent's behavior and attitudes toward the child, such as, overprotectiveness, irritability, impatience, coldness, continual nagging and scolding, not wanting to be "bothered" by the child. Frequently, one parent will request help because of the unhappy relationship between the other parent and the child.

The absence of one parent from the home usually creates problems for the child and for the parent who remains. The parent who has deserted, or is incarcerated in a penal institution, or is an inmate of a mental hospital has not been lost to the child because he is physically absent from the home. The relationship has not been severed. Children worry about the missing parent, are faced with the questions of other children, and are frequently in conflict because of the attitude of the remaining parent toward the absent one.

Conflict in community relationships

Some children are in trouble because they and their parents have not been able to establish satisfying relationships in the community. Differences between the family and the majority of the families in the neighborhood in economic status, social class, religion, nationality, or color frequently create barriers that are hard to scale for both adults and children. Under such circumstances, children suffer greatly. They need the companionship of other children to promote healthy growth.

The study of children involved in the "zoot suit" gangs in California during the last war showed that for one reason or another these children had been excluded from the larger community. So these outcasts banded together in loyalty and support for each other and in open antagonism to the community. Such conflicts frequently arise when people in one neighborhood are different from those in an adjacent neighborhood or when groups within a neighborhood have found a

bond and align themselves against other groups in the immediate community. Thus "gangs" are formed to protect the members against other "gangs." Differences between people, however, are not the only causes of the formation of juvenile gangs. Many other factors, internal and external, are operating in these situations.

Neglect and abuse of children

Some children are neglected, abused, or subjected to demoralizing influences by parents or others responsible for their care. Poor standards of housekeeping and physical care of children, because of their obviousness, are the major cause for complaints about these parents. Other important causes of complaints against parents are such behavior as: Drunkenness, quarreling and fighting, or leaving children unattended while frequenting taverns and beer parlors. These problems are often encountered in dealing with situations of neglect and abuse of children. Complaints are not made so often about the less obvious indications of neglect and abuse such as lack of affection and mental cruelty as expressed in the parents' restrictive and punishing attitude even though these may be more damaging to the child.

Not all neglect and abuse of children is willful. Some parents who are trying hard to do what they think is best fail in guiding and training their children because they lack knowledge of children's needs and sound child-rearing practices. Other parents are so overcome by the pressures, tensions, and anxieties of living that they do not have the heart, the skill, or the will to care for and protect their children. Still other parents, because of the emotional deprivations in their own bringing up, are so immature or so self-seeking they cannot supply the love, affection, and attention that children require. Some parents have had no experience in maintaining adequate standards of housekeeping and physical care of children. They lacked these in their own upbringing and they need help if they are to reach higher standards. Although for various reasons parents in these circumstances may not seek help, often they want it and are able to use it constructively once it is offered.

Chronic or long-term illness and physical handicaps

Ill children and those with physical handicaps are first of all children, with the same basic needs, desires, and strivings as other

children. They need the security that comes from the love and attention given by their parents. They need to belong. Like other children, they need to feel part of a family group. The incidence of chronic or prolonged illness and physically handicapping conditions put a strain on relationships within the family and become a complicating factor in the child's normal process of growth.

When a child returns to his home after prolonged hospital or convalescent care, problems of adjustment to his home and family usually occur. Because the child's activity must be restricted or other safeguards carried out because of his illness or his physical handicap, the child, his parents, and other members of his family frequently suffer from strain.

The fact that ill or physically handicapped children are first of all children is receiving wide recognition in many fields. Although many blind and deaf children are still being removed from their own homes and families and sent to institutions for the sole purpose of getting an education, the trend is toward keeping these children with their parents and their sisters and brothers and providing education for them in public schools with normal children. The acceptance of the fact that handicapped children whose condition does not require institutional care need normal relationships with children who are not handicapped has influenced this trend.

Problems arising from chronic or prolonged illness and physical handicaps grow out of the parent's attitudes toward the illness or handicap, the strain that comes from the amount of care and patience required, the child's attitude toward the condition, and his response to the attitudes of his parents and others. Parents frequently feel guilty about the child's condition and react either by being over solicitous or by completely rejecting him. Some parents cannot accept the fact that the child is ill or handicapped. They either seek no medical advice or care at all or they go to the other extreme and shop from doctor to doctor. In either case, adequate medical care is delayed.

Parents frequently face difficulties in the relationship between the ill or physically handicapped child and the other children in the family. Some parents may give all of their attention to the ill child, neglecting the other children. Others tend to make the well child give in to every wish and whim of the one who is ill, thus hampering the development of both children. Helping the ill or physically handicapped child in finding his way, and making a satisfactory adjustment to normal children, presents a real problem to his parents. When one child in the family suffers from chronic or long-term illness or a physical handicap, parents are faced with the question of how to give each child the care, attention, and affection that he needs, and to provide him with the opportunities to promote his growth.

Children react to the attitudes of those around them. They may become extremely dependent, demanding, or hostile. Or they may withdraw completely from relationships with others. Or they may unconsciously resist learning to do things for themselves for fear they will lose their power to control situations and people or their satisfactions from being dependent.

Mental handicaps

Children with mental handicaps, like those with physical handicaps, unless their condition is of such nature that they require institutional care for their own and others protection, need the security that comes from life in their own homes and families. Many children, even though very limited in mental capacity, if secure in their emotional growth, with appropriate training can live useful and satisfying lives. The practice of separating many of these children from their parents, sisters, and brothers for educational purposes only is open to serious question.

Illness or death of the mother

Some children need help because of the danger of breakdown in the family growing out of temporary or permanent incapacity or death of the mother. Although the father may want to keep the family together, he finds it difficult and sometimes impossible to be both the breadwinner and the substitute for the mother in the care and supervision of the children. Social services that hold families

together during such a crisis contribute to the family's feeling of solidarity and save the children from the traumatic experience involved in the simultaneous loss of the mother and placement in strange surroundings.

Lack of parental care for a substantial part of the day

Because of the employment of the mother or for other reasons, some children lack parental care for a substantial part of the day. Studies have shown that most women who are employed, work because of necessity. If adequate provision cannot be made for substitute parental care and protection of the children when mothers are employed, great hardships are placed on parents and on children.

Under these circumstances, children are subjected to makeshift and inadequate care in which good medical supervision is lacking, little attention is paid to nutrition, and the guidance and supervision of the child are entrusted to persons who lack knowledge of children's needs.

For many older children, no plan of substitute parental care is provided. "Door-key" children whose parents have left for work before they go to school and who return from school to an empty house are familiar to many communities. These children have no supervision or guidance and are left to their own devices for the major portion of the time when they are not in school. The summer vacation period poses additional problems for employed parents of school-age children. The appalling lack of adequate community resources for care of children who need substitute parental care for a part of the day is revealed in the following statement of an employed mother: "I trust God and the neighbors to care for my children after school hours and during vacation."

Problems of adjustment on return to own homes from foster care

Children returning to their own homes from foster family or institutional care need help in adjusting to their families and to their community. Parents, in turn, need help in their relationships with the child and in taking up once again their responsibilities for his

care and guidance. This adjustment is easier when social casework services have been provided to the parents during the period the child was in foster care.

What Social Services Should Be Available in Each Community

A VARIETY OF SOCIAL SERVICES are required to safeguard the welfare of children living in their own homes who need this help and to promote the well-being of all children in the community. Information provided by child welfare workers that helps relatively adequate and mature parents to a better understanding of the normal behavior of children and youth in relation to their stage of development is a social service. When the child welfare worker identifies resources in the community and helps the parent or child to get to and make use of these resources, he is providing a social service. Assistance given by child welfare workers to less adequate parents on such tangible and concrete things as improving the physical care of children or budgeting family income is also a social service. Working with a child individually or in a group to gain some understanding of why he feels and acts as he does, or modifying his environment so that he no longer needs to feel and act in ways that are disturbing to him and to others is a social service. When encouragement and direction are given by social workers to stimulate and involve citizens in the study of the social problems of children in their community, to examine the adequacy of resources available to meet these problems, and to carry out plans for developing the essential services, resources, or facilities, this is a social service.

Social casework, group work, and community organization are the methods through which social services are provided. These are distinct methods requiring specialized skills. There is, however, a generic base common to all three methods. This generic base is: Knowledge of human growth and behavior, knowledge of economic and social factors and their effect upon individuals and families; the use of the relationship between the social worker and the client—and the client may be an individual, a group, or the community—in affecting change, whether for the individual, the members of a group, or the community.

These three methods are interrelated in the process of serving people. Social casework is employed when providing social services individually. It is the method generally used in helping children living in their own homes and their parents. The relationship between the caseworker and the client is the medium through which help is supplied and the parent or child is able to grow. The effectiveness of casework is dependent upon the quality of this relationship, the skill of the caseworker, and the community resources available to the child or his parents.

Social group work is used to meet individual emotional and social needs through group experience. The individual grows through the interaction of group members with each other and with the group leader.

The social group work method is used in various ways in providing social services to or for the benefit of children living in their own homes. Parents' discussion groups are one example of the way in which the social group work method is used. Some social agencies are experimenting in the use of social group work with emotionally disturbed children living in their own homes. As skills in the diagnosis and the treatment of difficulties in social relationship increase, the children living in their own homes who can best be helped through social group work will be identified with greater clearness. The extension and wider use of the social group work method hold great promise for this group of children, who might otherwise need institutional care.

Community organization is the method employed to secure the participation of citizens in the community in a study of what is needed to improve family life for children and in action to develop the services and resources that enhance family living.

Child welfare workers must be acquainted with all of these three methods of providing social services, although casework is the method most commonly employed. They must have knowledge of the group process and the effect of the group on individual development, since the child is a part of a group—his family, school, neighborhood, or

other groups and is affecting and being affected by the group. Child welfare workers are often called upon to lead group discussions, work with committees, and in this way are involved in the group process. In their day-to-day work with children, child welfare workers have many community contacts and must be sensitive to the values, attitudes, mores, and tempo of the community as a whole. Also they frequently participate in community planning and organization.

The major emphasis in this publication is on the services provided through social casework by child welfare workers to children and their parents.

services Insuring healthy growth and adjustment of children

Social services help to insure healthy growth and development in children when they are extended to parents before difficulties occur. In some communities social welfare agencies concerned with children are extending their services to parents in this way through family life education programs. These programs are also being developed by educational institutions and in the extension programs of agricultural departments.

Experience in many communities has shown that these services are both needed and demanded once they are known. The remarks of a parent who was on the board of a public institution for delinquent youth typify the demand for such services. In order to improve the institution program, the State consultant on institutions invited a child psychologist to discuss with board members the needs of the children in the institution. The board members, however, utilized this opportunity to discuss their problems with their own children rather than concentrating on program planning for the children in the institution. At the end of the meeting, one member, a mother, said: "Why don't we have this service for ourselves? We are taxpayers and we help to support these programs but we get no direct benefit from them."

Through such family life education programs, social welfare agencies reach parents in their on-going organized groups sponsored by churches, parent-teacher associations, YMCA's or YWCA's, or other clubs or organizations. The purpose of the program is to give parents an opportunity to discuss their questions and problems centering about family interrelationships and child care and guidance.

Parents learn that their children's problems are not unique and that other parents are faced by the same problems. They learn that certain

behavior is to be expected at certain stages in the child's growth. They learn how other parents have dealt successfully with some situations. They get practical suggestions for dealing with family problems, such as budgeting family funds, viewing television programs, or planning for the children when they have guests in for the evening. Community problems affecting children frequently come in for consideration and action, too.

Through such group experiences, parents' anxieties are allayed, new ideas are developed, greater confidence is fostered, all of which culminate in renewed courage and belief in their ability to care for their children. When parents gain insight and greater confidence in their parental roles, boys and girls are helped in turn. Parents who need more intensive help than can be provided through such group discussions are directed to agencies where they can secure this service.

Programs of family life education offer child welfare agencies opportunities to extend their services to parents in general, thereby making effective their concern for and responsibility to promote the healthy growth of children and to strengthen family living. In addition to providing staff to lead discussions with parents in their organized groups, the child welfare agency should invite parents to visit the agency. The place in the agency office where these parent discussion groups are held should be physically comfortable, cheerful, and inviting. In this way, the community begins to see that the services of the agency are not limited to parents and children who are in trouble. The influence of the agency becomes more widespread, its program and services better understood, and the people in the community grow to feel that these services are theirs.

Developing discussion groups for adolescents may prove to be a real service to the agency and to the community. One of the characteristics of the adolescent period is the need young people have to talk among themselves. This is also the period of hero worship and identification with adults they admire, respect, and have confidence in. Guided discussions with a leader who understands the needs and problems of youth are usually most rewarding. Social group workers with training and experience in child welfare can make an important contribution to these programs.

Many day-care centers and nursery schools are encouraging parents to participate in their programs and activities. In many of these centers, parents' groups have been organized and the social worker or other staff members or persons from other fields have been used in leading discussions on child growth and development and parent-child and family interrelationships. Here also, if problems with children have already developed, they can be identified and the appropriate help given.

services Leading to the early discovery of children needing help

Obviously finding children when early signs of difficulty appear prevents more serious problems from developing. The early discovery of children living in their own homes who are in need of help should be given major consideration in child welfare programs. By the time many children come to the attention of social agencies, their behavior patterns are pretty well set. The longer difficulties persist, the more remote are possibilities for adjustment.

Social services for children living in their own homes are little known and understood by parents, by the general public, and by some agencies outside of the social welfare field which serve children. Such tangible services as foster care and adoption are more generally known and understood.

Many parents do not recognize when the child's behavior has serious implications. They say, "He's just mean" or "He was born ornery." Others are baffled and disturbed, but do not know where to turn for help or what help can be given. All of these are reasons why services leading to the early discovery of children in need of help are important.

Many child welfare agencies are unable to take care of all the children known to them whose circumstances and personal problems are so acute that they need immediate help. Because this is true, agencies are reluctant to stimulate additional requests for service which they are unable to meet. As long as this condition exists, time, effort, money and, most important, human resources will be wasted. We would consider it very foolish for a farmer to neglect his fields until the weeds had choked out his crops, instead of eliminating these noxious weeds early so that the tender young plants might grow full and strong. One of the major tasks in the child welfare field is the early discovery of children and their families who need help in order to prevent family breakdown and serious behavior disorders of children. All child welfare agencies ascribe to the great value of preventive services and the early discovery of children who need help is basic to such services.

Young parents present a rich and rewarding opportunity for prevention of emotional and behavior disorders in children. Through them, the child's environment can be modified early in his life so that healthy growth is promoted. Prenatal clinics, well-child and child-health conferences afford a good opportunity for reaching parents early in the life of the child. Doctors, public health nurses, and medical social workers in these health agencies have direct contact with parents, particularly with mothers, and young children. Early

signs of social difficulties such as negative feelings about pregnancy, exaggerated anxiety about the child, extreme impatience and strained parent-child relationships are observed by doctors and nurses. Pediatricians and public health nurses are often able to give these parents assurance about the child's physical development and progress. Medical social workers in these agencies are in a position to work with parents around these problems. In many instances, the medical social worker can help the parent in seeking and accepting the services of a child welfare agency. Pediatricians and public health nurses in prenatal clinics and well-child conferences can also be sources of referral to child welfare agencies for these parents and young children.

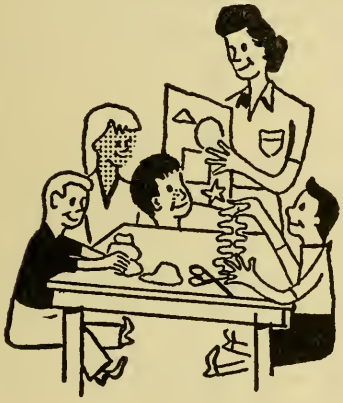
If teamwork between child welfare workers and public health nurses, pediatricians, and medical social workers in prenatal clinics and well-child conferences is to occur, all must have mutual understanding and respect for the services and responsibilities of their respective agencies. The limitations of each agency must be understood and accepted, too, so that what is expected of each agency bears some relation to what can be accomplished. The respective roles of the pediatrician, public health nurse, medical social worker, and the child welfare worker in counseling parents in relation to the care and guidance of their children must be clearly understood by both the social welfare and health agency. Medical staff must understand what social casework is, what services the child welfare worker can offer to parents and children, and which parents need and can profit from the sustained help of the child welfare worker. Obviously all parents coming to prenatal clinics and well-child conferences do not need social casework services.

The relationship between the child welfare and health agency must be administratively established on a mutual basis of respect and confidence if teamwork is to be realized. A sound and continuous working relationship cannot be built on the interest and concern of individual staff members alone.

Public health nurses are important sources in finding early those parents and children needing the help given by child welfare workers. The nurse has intimate contacts with families. She may serve families in all economic groups. She has excellent opportunities to observe not only the physical condition and health needs of children and their parents but the more subtle relationships within the family. For example, toward the end of the first year of life, or early in the second, the amount of food a child eats may suddenly become less than the amount he was eating a few months earlier. One of the reasons for this, of course, is that his rate of growth is declining, and his needs are therefore proportionately less. A mother inexperienced and unprepared for such a turn of events, may be apprehensive and try to force the child to eat more than he wants. Rebellion may result

and tensions follow. Here may be the beginnings of a problem that will interfere with a good mother-child relationship. The public health nurse, like the physician, tries to anticipate such problems and work with parents on developing an understanding that will make the path a little smoother for all concerned.

When more help is needed than the nurse can give, it is her job to look to other resources, and to help families see why other help is needed. The public health nurse and the child welfare worker can become strong allies in safeguarding and promoting the healthy development of children. Close collaboration between the public health department and the child welfare agency will bring about this unified approach. Also, through such teamwork, health and welfare services to individual families and children can be interrelated on the basis of mutual understanding of the individual's needs, hopes, and desires.



The provision of social casework services to day-care centers and nursery schools is another avenue for finding children and their parents who need help. Some social welfare agencies are providing intake services for day-care centers. Through such services, parents are helped to make sure that the use of the day-care center is the best plan for their child in view of the family situation. Mothers can be helped to weigh the question as to whether their earnings or their personal care of their children is paramount. What the mother's employment out of the home will mean to the children and to the family as a whole must be considered. The parents must also consider what the experience of the child in a day-care center will mean to them and to the child. Problems of marital discord may be back of the parents' wish for care for the child in a day-care center or nursery school. Through casework service at intake, the parents may be motivated to seek help on this problem and thereby come to a better decision about the use of the day-care or nursery-school facility. Pressures within the family that make the mother tense, distraught, and nervous may lead parents to seek care in an effort to free the mother from the responsibility of caring for her child for a portion of the day. Illness of the mother may be the reason for seeking nursery school or day-

care service. Of course, not all parents seek nursery school service because of problems. Many want the service to promote the child's growth and development.

Through social services provided at intake, many problems may be discovered and parents helped to understand what the real difficulty is, what resources are available, and what use they can make of them in meeting their problems. As a result, the children and their parents are spared more serious difficulties—difficulties that would arise inevitably if problems were allowed to persist.

When social services are a continuing part of the nursery school or day-care center program, the social worker brings to the staff his knowledge and experience to help them in their work with children and in their contacts with parents. The social worker is also able to identify children whose behavior suggests emotional difficulty. Parents are made aware of the needs of the child as observed by the social worker. When the child requires more help than can be supplied by the nursery school staff through their activities with children and their contacts with parents, the social worker is in a position to provide social services or to help the parents seek and secure assistance from the child welfare agency or other appropriate community agency.

The public schools reach more children than any other institution in our society. When school personnel understand child behavior and the social services available in the community to deal with behavior problems, they become a vital resource for finding children needing help. The process of getting help to children early is facilitated when social workers are employed in the schools, when they have a chance to use their social work knowledge and skills for the advantage of troubled children who are not benefiting from the school program, and when the school and the child welfare agency work as a team through clearly defined relationships and agreements.

In many of our communities, schools do not have social workers on their staffs. Under these circumstances other means must be used to bring about sound working relationships between the schools and the child welfare agency. Some agencies have met this problem by offering consultation to the schools. Conferences with school personnel are planned in which information about programs and services is exchanged and children's needs and problems are discussed. Following these conferences, procedures for discussion and referral of individual children to the agency are worked out. The value of such close collaboration with the schools over a period of years is attested to by one county child welfare agency who reports that it is "much easier and more effective to work with problem children in the public schools and prevent juvenile delinquency than it is to wait until they

arrive in the juvenile court and then attempt to correct a much more crystalized pattern of misbehavior."[4]

A program planned to give a continuous interpretation of children's needs and the social services that are available to meet them is another method of locating children requiring help. This makes necessary a close relationship with other agencies in the community serving children, with other professions, with civic groups, and with citizens.

Ministers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, recreation workers are all key people who should be brought in close relation to the child welfare agency so that they may know where to turn for help for children. Law-enforcement officials play an important part in the lives of many children. They should also understand children's needs and agency services so that they can direct children and their parents to social services when the early signs of difficulties appear.

As civic groups and individual citizens come to understand what social services can do for troubled children and their parents, interest in and support for programs of child welfare services can be developed and children needing care can be identified.

services Dealing with behavior problems of children

Through social casework services, the causes of children's behavior difficulties may be explored. These difficulties may be caused by unsatisfactory relationships between the parents and the child, between the parents, or emotional problems within the child himself. Frequently when the difficulty is the result of unsatisfactory parent-child relationships, the child does not have to be involved in treatment; under such circumstances the child welfare worker works with the parents only. Parents may be helped to understand how their own behavior toward each other and the child are causing the child to act as he does. Through the interest shown by the child welfare worker in the parents themselves, his belief in their ability to create a better environment for the child, and his sincere desire to help them do this, the parents may be freed to talk about their own problems. In many instances this may be the first time the parents have been able to look at these problems clearly and to talk about them. As the parent talks, the child welfare worker gives assurance, makes comments, or asks questions. He tries to feel with the parent, to follow the parent's lead. Through this process, the parent may discover for himself some of the reasons for his difficulty and perhaps a solution for them. Through this experience tensions may be so eased that

[4] The Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, Florida. Fourth Annual Report, 1950–1951. 47 pp. (p. 12). (Mimeographed.)

parents are able to redirect their energies with the result that the relationship with the child and between themselves improves. Sometimes change is produced by supplying new knowledge or by giving practical suggestions in regard to child-caring practices.

Social casework services to the parents of the child do not always meet the needs of the child. Frequently children, themselves, need direct help. This is true with young children as well as with those who are older.

Often young children cannot tell directly what is troubling them. To a warm, sympathetic, and friendly adult, they can and will talk about the things that interest them—their pets, toys, playmates, and even their world of make-believe. As the child welfare worker listens to what the child talks about spontaneously, the worker begins to understand the child's situation and his need to behave as he does. The child is quick to sense and feel the worker's acceptance of him, even of thoughts he, himself, considers "bad."

Words are not the young child's only means of expression. He also reveals himself through play and the creative use of materials—clay, crayons, or paint. The child welfare worker gains in understanding of the child as he watches the child at play or sees what he creates. On the basis of this understanding, and through his relationship with the child, he attempts to create an environment in which the child is free to express his feelings of love, affection, hostility, aggression, or anxiety. The child welfare worker learns how the child handles these feelings and how he relates himself to adults and to other children. This understanding gives the child welfare worker clues as to whether the child is dealing satisfactorily with his fears, hostilities, or aggression or if he must use his emotional energy to suppress, deny, or handle them in other unhappy and disturbing ways. On the basis of this kind of evaluation the child welfare worker is able to determine if the child needs direct treatment or if treatment should be directed toward modifying the environment of the child.

Older children who have acquired facility with language can be helped through the use of the interview. But as with all "troubled" people, these children have not developed enough insight to know what is bothering them. They can tell what happened, but usually they end up with, "I don't know why I did it." The child welfare worker must know how to listen to a child—how to hear what he has not said. Sometimes, also, the worker must help him say what he is unable to put into words. He must understand the meaning of what the child says. Frequently children need to test the worker. They need to know what kind of person he is, what to expect from him. In all these ways the worker gains understanding of the child's difficulty and how the child is dealing with it.

In some instances, the child's behavior may be a normal and healthy reaction to a bad environment. School programs that are not challenging or suited to the needs of the child, a home or school climate that is restrictive or oppressive, community conditions that do not offer avenues for healthy and constructive release of energy cause children to react in ways that are disturbing to themselves and to other people.

This was true for 8-year-old Joseph, the only child of middle-aged parents. Although Joseph was above average in intelligence, he was failing in school. Because he constantly played for attention, he disrupted the classroom. He could not get along with other children either in school or in the neighborhood. He annoyed other children in the schoolroom by hitting them, snatching their possessions, pulling chairs out from under them, and in many other ways. His span of attention was also short, making it difficult for him to complete his school assignments.

When the exasperated father came to the child welfare agency for help in coping with Joseph, study of the situation by the worker revealed that these conscientious parents knew very little about how a child grows and develops. They gave Joseph good physical care but the home environment was so oppressive and restrictive that Joseph was fighting to escape. The parents were very religious and attempted to guide and control Joseph through fear of retribution. He was not allowed to have a cowboy suit like other boys because it was "wrong to permit a child to have a gun." He was constantly reminded that he might grow up to be a criminal if he didn't do as his parents wanted him to do. Joseph spent all day Sunday in church and in going to hospitals with his father to visit and pray with sick people who neither of them knew. His parents believed that any show of affection or love would "spoil" the child. Joseph conformed outwardly at home, but he was so starved for love and affectionate attention that he had to try to get it in the only way he knew how—by constant bids for attention in the less restrictive environment of the classroom.

The plan of casework treatment developed by the child welfare worker included: Helping the classroom teacher to create a better school climate for Joseph; developing a relationship between himself and Joseph which was relaxed and affectionate and through which Joseph could express his fears and hostilities; and, if possible, helping the parents to understand Joseph's needs and to change their methods of care on the basis of this understanding. The child welfare worker explained Joseph's home situation to the teacher, interpreting the parents' strengths and needs as well as Joseph's. In this way the teacher gained some understanding of the parents and the problems they faced in their care of Joseph. The teacher and the child welfare

worker talked about ways in which Joseph could gain attention in the classroom on a desirable basis without being singled out, and how his sense of satisfaction and responsibility might be developed through successful achievement. He could be sent on responsible errands for the teacher; he could pass out and collect materials, but at the same time he must be given responsibility for performing these tasks adequately. Through the help given by the child welfare worker, the teacher began to understand Joseph's problem with the result that she was less baffled by his behavior. She eagerly experimented on ways to further his adjustment in the classroom.

Joseph, himself, furnished the child welfare worker with the opportunity for establishing a relationship with him in a natural way. On one of the worker's visits to the home, Joseph asked his permission to ride in his car. With the parents' consent, trips were planned with Joseph and it was through them that a warm relationship with him was established. At first, Joseph tried to establish a relationship with the worker by impressing him with his goodness. He denied any wrongdoing. Other children "picked" on him. Gradually he was able to talk about his fears—he might be a "criminal"—the police would get him—he was afraid of the dark. Although at first he declared it was wrong for children to play with guns, by Christmas time he was free enough to express to the worker his great desire for a cowboy suit with "two guns." Through new experiences in a more easy, warm, and understanding environment, Joseph was increasingly able to find satisfactions in a more positive way and had less need to constantly play for attention.

In relation to the parents, the child welfare worker explained what children of Joseph's age were like, their need for companionship with children of their own age, their need to play with other children. He commended them on the good physical care they gave Joseph, and their desire to give him proper supervision and guidance. He discussed child rearing practices and how too great an emphasis on negatives was making Joseph extremely fearful. He recognized with them the difficulties they were facing in their efforts to give Joseph the care and guidance he needed.

With the parents' permission the worker took Joseph to visit with children near his own age in a foster home where the foster mother was warm and understanding. Joseph had a good time and the foster mother and children enjoyed him. Joseph's parents were anxious about this visit for fear that Joseph would fight with the other children, not get along with the foster mother, and generally reflect upon them as being poor parents. They were very pleased with the outcome of the visit and took great pride in the fact that he was invited to return. The parents accompanied him on his next visit to the foster home and Joseph was permitted to invite the children to

visit him. Thus, Joseph's experience in being accepted and in being able to build a satisfying relationship with others increased his confidence. And the parents learned and gained confidence in Joseph and in themselves from seeing how other children act and from their experience with the foster parents.

Although the parents' fundamental personality patterns did not change, through the sustained and supporting help of the child welfare worker, they were able to be less restrictive with Joseph. Joseph was no longer required to accompany his father on visits to the hospital and the child welfare worker was permitted to give Joseph a cowboy suit with two guns for a Christmas present.

Children living in their own homes who are known to the police or the courts because of their behavior are in trouble. Their difficulties have their origin in bad companionships, poor home or community environments, lack of satisfactions in school, difficulties in the parent-child relationship, or emotional problems of the child himself. Whatever the cause of their difficulty, these children need skilled help. Requiring the child who has been put on probation by the court to follow such routines as, reporting to the probation officer, attending school regularly, going to church, does not always meet the basic needs of these children. Frequently no services are offered to the parents. Whether services are given by probation staff attached to the courts, probation departments, or public child welfare agencies, casework services should be provided by staff competent to give the quality of services needed. In most instances casework services should be given to parents and to children. Case loads should be small enough so that individual help can be provided as long as it is needed.

Casework services to the parents of these children should: help them understand the significance of the child's behavior and their own responsibility in it; motivate them to improve the situation to the limits of their ability; tell them about the resources available and assist them in using these resources; and provide them with understanding, encouragement, and support, as they try to improve their relationship with the child or the conditions surrounding him. The same kind of skilled help is needed for the child.

The social implications of unmarried motherhood and fatherhood create many problems for the persons involved whether they are children or adults. A large number of illegitimate births in this country are to teen-age girls. In many instances teen-age boys are involved. Many of these girls and boys are still living in their own homes. Many of the girls remain in their own homes after care in a maternity home or confinement in a hospital. Requests for help for unmarried mothers are usually in relation to care during delivery and confinement, to a plan of care for the baby, and to protection during the period of pregnancy and confinement. Usually unmarried mothers and fathers do not know about services that will help them with their own personal problems.

All unmarried mothers face difficulties that extend beyond arrangements for their own medical care and for the care of their child. Whether they are living in their own homes, or going to school, or working in another community, the problem of their relationship to their own families is important. Some are determined to keep the knowledge of their difficulties from their parents. They need help in evaluating whether this is a wise decision. Others are in conflict. Shall I tell my parents? Shall I keep this from them? The acceptance, understanding, and support from parents and family are important assets for all unmarried mothers during this period of crisis. This does not mean that parents approve the behavior that has brought about the difficulty. In fact, it means the opposite. This acceptance and support means to the unmarried mother, "In spite of your behavior, we still love you, want you, and will see you through."

Through this kind of relationship with her parents and family, the unmarried mother is freed from much emotional strain and stress, is better able to come to a decision about the child and her own future, and is more capable of facing the community with a relative degree of security. It will save her from living a life of subterfuge, forever guarding her secret. If we could objectively analyze the problem of unmarried parenthood within minority groups, we might find that what has been generally considered as "cultural difference" or indifference, is courage—courage that is born out of the necessity to cope with difficulties in many aspects of life, courage to pick up the pieces of broken dreams and aspirations, courage to go on living.

Parents frequently cannot give the support the girl needs unaided. They are embarrassed by this catastrophe, fearful of what it will mean to the girl and to the family, guilty and self-blaming or vindictive to the girl for bringing this disgrace upon them, ashamed to face their friends and the community—and their reaction to the girl reflects these feelings and attitudes.

Casework services to the girl and her parents help them understand and deal with their feelings and attitudes toward the problem of

pregnancy outside of marriage. The caseworker's understanding and support allays anxiety and furnishes an outlet for feelings and tensions to the girl and her parents. Parents and child secure some understanding about what has led to the difficulty. They are given help in working through these problems. Through the help provided by casework and the suport of her family, the girl is better able to come to a decision about the child that is best for all concerned. If casework were made available earlier to pregnant unmarried girls and their parents, many more of these girls would be able to remain in their own homes and to have the benefit of the love and support of their parents and family.

Unmarried fathers usually come to the attention of social agencies through the agency's efforts to establish the paternity of the child, to secure support for the baby, or to help the unmarried father and mother come to a decision about marriage. When unmarried fathers are approached on the basis of sympathetic understanding and a desire to be helpful, it freqeuntly turns out that they need and want help. With teen-age boys often the problem of unmarried fatherhood is not the first or the only symptom of their need for help. Other problems of behavior have been evident previously.

These unmarried fathers need help in relation to the immediate situation. Is marriage the best solution for the child, for the girl, for themselves? How will the fact of unmarried parenthood affect their future plans? Can they continue in school? What about support for the child? Through casework help that is supplied in relation to the immediate difficulty, other problems of the unmarried father may be revealed, and ways of assisting him may be discovered.

The ultimate goal of casework services for both unmarried mothers and fathers is to help them to make an adjustment that will prevent this difficulty from being repeated.

Obviously not all unmarried mothers and fathers are teen-age girls and boys. Some are adults, married and unmarried. Some have families of their own. Many of them want and can use help in deciding what should be done in relation to their involvement in pregnancy outside of marriage.

services Improving parent-child relationships

Frequently parents are not conscious of their attitudes toward the child. And even when they are conscious of their irritation, impatience, harshness or indifference, they may not understand the reasons for it. Frequently also they are not aware of what the effect is on the child.

These parents need help in recognizing the fact that they are damaging the healthy development of their child. They need the under-

standing that comes as the child welfare worker helps them talk about their problems and how they feel about the situation. They need help to want to do something about their feelings and attitudes toward the child and their relationships to each other. They need help in the process of change.

Parent and child frequently need help in relation to the child's questions and feelings about an absent parent. The parent in the home may want advice on what and how to tell the child about the parent who is in a penal institution, a mental hospital, or is absent for other reasons. He or she may also want help in regard to his or her own feelings about the absent parent. How can the mother, for instance, handle her feelings of hostility and hatred toward the father who has deserted his family so that the child is not caught in conflict between the loyalty to his mother and his feeling for his father? How can the mother help the child to express his real feelings for his father? How can she be helped to understand the child's need for his father in spite of her attitudes toward her husband? These are questions with which child welfare workers frequently deal. They can be handled in a helpful way through casework services given by a worker who is aware of the relationships between parent and child and between the parents, even though one parent is absent; by a worker who possesses skill in understanding the situation and helping parent and child to deal effectively with their feelings and attitudes about it. Through the help provided, relationships between family members are strengthened and anxieties and conflicts are eased.

services For children who are neglected or abused

Children who are seriously neglected or abused come to the attention of the child welfare agency because someone other than the parent, or an agency in the process of providing other services to the parent, has discovered the situation. Whatever the circumstances under which these children come to the attention of the agency, the responsibility of the agency is to offer services to the parents in relation to their neglect or abuse of the child in such a way that they want to do something about the problem and to accept help in dealing with it. Offering help to parents who have not requested it is frequently disturbing to child welfare workers. They are accustomed to working with people who want help and seek it. One of the cardinal casework principles is that when a person seeks help, he has taken the first step toward doing something about his problems. Child welfare workers sometimes feel uneasy when it is necessary to offer services to parents who have not taken this first step. These parents are seen as different from those who recognize that a problem exists and seek help with it.

But are these parents who have not requested help so different from those who do? Parents who seek help with their child frequently expect the worker to "reform" Johnny and hand him back to them a better boy. They are disturbed when it is clear that they are involved in Johnny's bad behavior and must be included in the treatment process. Some withdraw when they realize that they must go through the sometimes painful process of facing and working out some of their own emotional problems. The worker recognizes this. He is ready to help the parents understand their part in the situation and to give them support and encouragement as they work through the problem.

And this is exactly what the child welfare worker does when he offers service to parents who neglect or abuse their children. He recognizes that their hostility is normal and to be expected. He is not misled by the parent who acquiesces too suddenly and is sure everything will be all right from now on.

In providing casework services to these parents, as with others, the child welfare worker must be understanding, accepting, and nonjudgmental. This does not mean that he condones the parent's inadequate care of his child. The worker can understand why the parent acts as he does without approving his behavior. This is important in casework with children and adults. Parents, like children, need strengths that are greater than their own to which they can relate, on which they can depend. They are troubled, too, by their own behavior.

True, there are certain aspects of casework services to parents who neglect their children that are not present to the same degree in working with other parents. The agency must reach out, must take the initiative in offering services to these parents. It must be clear between the worker and the parents that the child's situation must improve. The parent must understand what the consequences are, if he does not wish to accept the service. It must be clear that the agency will stay in the situation until the child's welfare is reasonably safeguarded or court action has been taken, if the parent cannot or will not improve his care of the child. The child welfare worker must understand what legal evidence of neglect is in order that an adequate plan of care for the child can be made through court action.

The child welfare worker also has a responsibility to the complainant. He has the responsibility for acting promptly on the complaint. After evaluating the circumstances and working out a plan, even though tentative, the plan should be explained to the complainant. If there are possibilities for improving the situation, these should be made known to the complainant, too. In doing this the strengths in the situation may need to be identified. At the same time the complainant should be helped to understand that progress may be slow,

that reversion to old patterns of behavior may occur, and that improvement cannot come overnight. Frequently this kind of interpretation to the complainant helps him see the parents in a different light. Attitudes toward the parents are changed from criticism and derision to understanding, sympathy, and respect. The complainant may also begin to see how he can be helpful. Most important he will have a better understanding of what is best for these children.

At first glance, these facts may seem harsh in relation to the parent. But when these are made clear in an atmosphere that is warm, understanding, and nonblaming by a child welfare worker who really wants to be helpful and believes in the parents' ability to improve their care of their children, most parents are freed of doubts and anxieties about the worker and the agency. They see and accept the realities of the situation. They begin to feel that they, too, can become better parents and most parents want to be good parents. It is part of the total culture of the country.

The factor of authority is usually raised in relation to protective services. It is necessary to realize that authority is inherent in all situations when dealing with people who are experiencing breakdown in their ability to function adequately and who must have help. Through legislation and community assent, social welfare agencies are empowered or given the authority to provide services to people, to determine who is eligible for and on what basis the service will be given, etc. Viewed in this light, authority denotes responsibility. It is responsible action. Social workers can be comfortable with authority when it is seen in these terms and the source of the authority is understood. Having the authority to provide a service gives confidence and support to the workers. This, of course, does not mean authoritative action.

The administrative social agency, public or voluntary, providing protective services has only one aspect of authority beyond that of any other social agency. This is the authority given by legislation or community assent to go into family situations upon complaint and without the parents' request. This is responsible action growing out of the agency's authority and the community's concern for the protection of children. The agency also has the responsibility for staying in the situation until conditions are improved or the children are brought to the attention of the court. Any agency or responsible citizen has the right to file petitions in court, if there is evidence of neglect or abuse of children. This is not the exclusive responsibility of agencies providing protective services. The agency offering services to parents who neglect or abuse their children has no authority to make parents accept the service or improve their care of the children. It has no authority to remove children from the parents' homes without their consent. This authority rests in the court. The extent

to which parents accept social services and want to improve depends upon the quality of the casework relationship and the skills of the worker.

Casework services enable these parents to face the fact that the situation needs to be improved. Through the positive relationship established with them, the child welfare worker tries to understand the causes of the difficulty and to motivate the parents to do something about the problem. On the basis of his understanding of the strengths and limitations of the parents, the worker helps them to progress at the rate and to the extent they are able to grow.

Not all casework deals directly with the client's feelings and attitudes. Many parents are not able to begin at the point of their own emotional conflicts. It is important always to know where the parents are at the present time and what they are able to begin to do about the situation. They may be able to tackle some tangible problem, however simple, such as planting a garden to stretch the family budget, planning meals so that the whole family sits down together, getting Johnny to a doctor or a clinic so that his physical condition can be determined. Through the help of the child welfare worker, these accomplishments bring new hope, deep satisfaction, and renewed confidence to the parent. Even making one decision, completing one small task satisfactorily, helps the parent make other decisions and move on to larger accomplishments. This new confidence and sense of satisfaction frequently changes the parent's feelings about himself, his marriage partner, and the child.

Not all parents can be good parents. Although they may love and be concerned for their child, some parents, because of mental or physical incapacities or limitations resulting from early emotional deprivation, lack the maturity to give children the care, protection, and guidance they need. But even though unable to care for the child themselves, many of these parents can be helped to accept foster care and to share in providing it for the child. By so doing, they fulfill their parental responsibilities to the best of their ability.

Casework services for children who are neglected can be preventive in nature if situations are discovered early and services provided promptly so that the child's own family is strengthened.

services Helping children suffering from chronic or long-term illness and physical handicaps

Social casework services are made available to these children and their parents to help them in relation to their attitudes and feelings about the illness or handicap. Through such help, parents may begin to recognize and to understand their own feelings and their reactions

to them; they may learn to deal with these feelings of guilt, self-blame, or shame.

Parents, especially mothers, who react in terms of complete devotion and self-sacrifice to the ill or handicapped child may discover for themselves that what they have rationalized as being "good parents" may not be this at all. This is usually very disturbing and difficult for them to accept. Parents need understanding and support during this period, when they are trying to achieve self-understanding. Through casework services, parents learn to accept the fact of the illness or handicap. They may also be encouraged to secure a diagnosis of the condition, the medical care needed, and then to carry out the medical recommendations.

Parents may need practical help on how to deal with the child, how to help him do things for himself to the extent that he is able, what decisions and choices the child is able to make himself, and how best to meet the child's reactions to his illness or handicap whether they are expressed in complete dependency, irritability, hostility, withdrawal, or aggression. Parents can be helped in understanding the child himself, his reactions, and his needs.

Children who suffer from chronic or long-term illness and physical handicaps frequently need help in understanding and accepting the limitations resulting from their condition. They may need help in recognizing what abilities they have and stimulation in developing and using them. The reactions of children to illness and physical handicaps differ. These reactions also vary at different stages of development. For the adolescent who is becoming quite self-conscious, a physical handicap may cause much unhappiness and feelings of insecurity.

In providing casework services to these children, the child welfare workers need help in understanding the significance of the medical condition—the prognosis, the treatment, what the child can reasonably do to live a happy and useful life, what safeguards need to be thrown around him. The child welfare worker can secure this help from a medical social worker connected with a health department, a clinic, or a hospital, or from the physician.

services Helping children with mental handicaps

It is usually very difficult for parents to accept the fact that their child has limited mental ability. They frequently feel this is a reflection on them; that it indicates there is some defect in the family strain. Parents may blame teachers, the schools, or others for the child's inability to learn. They are sure he is brighter than he has

been judged to be; they may even magnify what the child is able to do because of their need to deny his limitations. Other parents push the child beyond his capacities causing him to feel frustrated, inadequate, and a failure.

Many children whose mental limitations are not so great that they are a menace to themselves and others are able to live normal, useful lives in their communities. In some communities this is made possible by developing educational programs within the public schools for exceptional children.

Like physically handicapped children, these children need love, acceptance, and guidance from their parents and the security of their own homes. Social services help parents understand their feelings about the mental handicap, accept the fact of the child's condition, and provide opportunities so that the child can develop to his full capacity. The child welfare worker can help parents give the child their support and encouragement and provide the opportunities for achievement that he needs.

Children, themselves, sometimes need help in relation to their handicap. Through the positive relationships within his own home, through encouragement and support, the child gains self-respect and self-confidence.

In direct services to the child, the child welfare worker can encourage his efforts, increase his self-esteem and confidence through the purposeful relationship that is established with him as the following illustration shows: Frank Allan, age 19, and his mother were referred to the children's agency by the vocational-rehabilitation agency for help in accepting the fact of Frank's mental limitations.

Psychological examination given during his school career had shown Frank to have very low mental ability. The examination at the vocational-rehabilitation agency had also revealed this. Frank had been in the ungraded class at school until he was excluded because he could not profit from more school experience. Frank was an only child, and Mrs. Allan had devoted her whole life to his care, protecting him as she would an infant. At the time he came to the children's agency, he had never been downtown or on a streetcar alone. He had

never dressed himself completely or combed his own hair. Mrs. Allen was quite sure that Frank had more ability than the tests had indicated. She blamed herself—and the school—for permitting him to remain in ungraded classes when he was in school. This had retarded his progress, she felt. She believed that he had real mechanical ability because he enjoyed building things. That was why she had taken him to the vocational-rehabilitation center for training that would prepare him to be employed at a job in which he could use mechanical skills. It was impossible to convince Mrs. Allan and Frank that the tests indicated he had no such ability. Actually he had the ability to learn to do only the simplest tasks such as those of a messenger or errand boy.

Casework services were provided to Mrs. Allan and Frank individually at the children's agency. The worker helped Mrs. Allan accept Frank's limitations—what Frank could, and could not, do. The worker helped Mrs. Allen to understand and then to accept the fact that Frank could lead a useful and satisfying life in spite of his limitations. Slowly Mrs. Allan began to understand how her relationship with Frank had hindered his development and why she was overprotective of him. The worker supported and encouraged her as she sought ways to give Frank more freedom, more opportunities for achievement. At the same time the worker was understanding and helped the mother to handle her fears and anxieties.

Frank was encouraged to be more independent, too. Patiently, week after week, the worker explained to Frank that he was not coming to the agency to find a job but to learn to be more independent. Gradually he was able to report "I dressed myself today," or "I combed my hair," or "I tied my shoes." As Frank grew in this relationship, he was given an appointment with the worker on a different day from his mother's appointment. He was encouraged to come to the office alone. Frank began going alone for his training at the vocational rehabilitation center. At the end of a year of casework service, Frank was scanning the advertisements in the paper for a job that was within his capabilities, that he could perform.

services Holding families together

Present-day families are much smaller than they were two or three generations ago. Rapid industrialization and the shift from rural to urban living have to some degree influenced this trend. Today it is unusual for a household to include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and married adult children. Families are also moving about more.

They not only move from rural areas into nearby urban centers, but they move from coast to coast and from one geographical region to another. Married children may be scattered over the country, brothers and sisters separated from each other, and all separated from the parents. As a result, when a crisis arises in a family because of the illness, hospitalization, or death of the mother, often no close relatives are at hand to step in and hold the family together.

To meet this need, social welfare agencies have established programs of homemaker service. The agency selects women, chosen for their skills in homemaking, their ability to get along with others, and their facility in adjusting to various situations, and places them in families where children are lacking their mother's care because the mother is ill in the home, has been hospitalized, or has died. The father's willingness and ability to assume additional responsibility is an important factor in determining whether homemaker service can be effective in keeping the family together.

The homemaker supplements but does not supplant what the mother normally does for the children. She is careful to carry on the same pattern of living that the mother has established. As one homemaker expressed this, "we do it their way." When the mother is in the home but is limited in her activity, the homemaker tries not to usurp the mother's role although she must take over some of her responsibilities. This requires that the homemaker be understanding of and sensitive to people. Under these conditions, the division of responsibility must also be clearly defined in regard to the guidance and supervision of children and the carrying out of household tasks. When the mother is absent from the home because of illness or death, the introduction of the homemaker brings even greater changes into the home. Father and children often find it difficult to adjust to these changed circumstances. To meet all of these situations, casework service is required.

services For children needing substitute parental care for part of the day

The significance of social services in day-care and nursery school programs for children living in their own homes lies in their contribution to protecting and strengthening the values of the child's own home and family. When children 3 years of age or over have a secure relationship with their parents, and know that parents will return at a certain time each day, they do not feel completely separated from them nor do they feel the loss of the love of their parents. The growth and development that comes from their experience with other children and adults in these facilities are carried over in the child's relationships in his family situation. Parents profit from what they learn

about the child and the methods employed that have furthered this development.

The child welfare worker is able to observe each child in the day-care center or nursery school in his relation to other children and the staff. Where difficulties are evident, he seeks to gain an understanding of them through discussions with the parents and with the staff. He helps parents understand the significance of the child's behavior and how this may relate to their attitudes toward or their handling of the child. In the same way, he can tell parents about such things as the child's ease in adjusting to the group setting and to other adults. He can commend and encourage them because of the understanding and good judgment they are showing in relation to the child. The worker may also be able to help the staff understand the child and his needs on the basis of the knowledge the worker has gained of his background and his family situation. He may make suggestions to the staff on how they can work with the child on the basis of his needs and how the child can be helped in his activities in the group and in his relations to other children.

Thus, an adequate nursery school or day-care program may enhance the relationship between parents and children and strengthen family living.

services To children returned to their own homes from foster care

When a child who has been living away from his own home for a period of time returns to his family, problems in adjustment always occur. In the first place, the child who returns to the home is not the same child who left it. The child has changed in many ways—and so has his family. Young children are developing fast and older children are influenced by new situations as development continues. Home conditions may have changed also during the child's absence.

Under such circumstances, the child and his parents may need help on very specific problems. In many instances, the child needs direct help in his relation to family members, to the school, and to the community. This help is provided through the child welfare worker's knowledge and understanding of the factors in the situation as this knowledge develops through his continued relationship with the family.

Parents want assistance on such problems as how will they explain to neighbors, playmates, and school personnel where the child has been. Why has he needed to be away from home? Here parents are concerned not so much with what words they will say, but how they can meet the situation in terms of their own feelings. Parents may

need help in resuming their parental role. Some may seek to place this responsibility on the worker. Consequently the worker's efforts must be focused on helping the parent assume his own responsibility. Child welfare workers must be on guard constantly that they do not take over the parental role. The child welfare worker can help the parent, only if the worker's attitude and approach shows belief in the parents' ability to resume their responsibilities and allows them freedom to make their own decisions.

Frequently suggestions and advice on specific problems are sought by the parents and supplied by the worker. For example, a mother was troubled about how much freedom and latitude she should permit her daughter who had just returned home from the State training school for delinquent girls. The training school has a progressive program and, at certain stages of their development, the girls are allowed to take advantage of community resources such as church activities, picture shows, YWCA activities, etc. The mother was worried because before her commitment to the State training school, the girl had taken advantage of such liberties as these to stay out late at night or to go to places forbidden by the mother.

How was the mother to meet this problem? From the child welfare worker she needed some interpretation of the institution's program in terms of what liberties meant and how they were handled. She needed specific suggestions on ways of placing responsibility on the girl and how to hold her accountable. She needed to feel the worker would understand, if the girl took advantage of the liberties granted her. She needed to feel the worker's confidence in her ability to handle this situation. The strength and security of the mother's relationship with the worker was the bulwark against the mother's fears, anxieties, and sense of failure while the girl was finding her way back to normal home and community living. The girl, in turn, needed the same kind of warm acceptance, understanding, and continued support from the child welfare worker.

services For children seeking help in their own behalf

Some adolescents come to the attention of social agencies on their own request. It is this group of children, the adolescents, more than others, who seek help on their own behalf. More adolescents would seek such help if services were available, if they knew about them and what help they could receive.

Casework services to adolescents living in their own homes are in connection with their requests for help and their needs as they recognize them or as they are helped to recognize them. Requests for services and the needs revealed by these requests vary from one adolescent to another.

Frequently adolescents come requesting financial assistance so they may continue in school. This is usually to secure money for clothing, school fees, lunches, transportation, or for an allowance for recreation and other incidentals. Some child welfare agencies have funds from which this kind of help can be supplied. Other agencies will need to develop or have information as to where such help may be given.

Along with the many other changes that occur during adolescence in the normal process of growth come changes in the young persons relationship to his parents, to the opposite sex and to himself. With the help of understanding parents, many adolescents pass through this period without too much difficulty. Others may need help.

Some adolescents may need casework services for emotional or behavior problems. Like casework to other individuals, casework helps the adolescent understand and accept the realities of his situation. He is helped to see his part in it and accept his responsibility for it. He gains some understanding of his feelings and the reasons why he feels as he does. Then, step by step, he is helped to do something about his own situation, to understand the choices that are possible, and the consequences of these choices. He is given the freedom to make his own decisions in keeping with his ability.

Services to adolescents must be provided within the framework of their own groups. At this period in their development, adolescents need close association with people of their own age. The influence of the group on the adolescent is greater than the influence of the parents. Therefore the values, standards, and mores of the group must be understood and dealt with, if the services are to be effective.

In providing casework to adolescents, frequently parents are not involved; in other instances, they are involved. In all instances, whether involved directly or not, parents need to understand and accept the child welfare worker's relationship to the child.

services For parents seeking help

Services to parents who seek help with their child-rearing problems range from giving them information and suggestions on specific prob-

lems to providing direct help in their relationship to the child or other parent. With relatively mature parents where relationships within the family are good and children are growing satisfactorily, all that may be needed is reassurance and information about the community resources available, or concrete suggestions on their child-rearing practices.

Many parents request help because some aspect of their child's behavior disturbs them. Frequently they do not understand, nor are they able to accept the fact, that they have contributed to the problem and they are equally at a loss as to what they can do about it. This is not unusual and is to be expected. The purpose of casework services in these situations is to help the parent recognize his part in the child's problem and to assume responsibility for it. He is also encouraged to want to change the situation. This is accomplished through the understanding of self that he is able to achieve as he talks out his difficulty with a child welfare worker. The parent is able to achieve growth through the stimulation and support of the skilled worker.

services Helping parents and children use community resources

Social services that help parents and children know what community resources are available and how to make effective use of them may be needed for any or all of the children and their parents described above. This is more than just a referral service. In the process the child and his parents grow to understand the service of the agency to which they are referred. The child welfare worker stands by to give any help that may be needed until the parents and child follow through on the referral and have established their relationship with the other agency. The agency to which the parent and child has been referred has a better opportunity to understand the needs of the child and his parents through the cooperation of the referring agency.

Cultural factors influence services

Cultural factors have great significance in providing casework services to parents and children.

The child welfare worker must be able to understand the cultural factors operating in the situation. He must be able to deal realistically with them and not to superimpose his own standards upon the child or his parents. Culture is used here in its broadest sense, as including all of the influences that help to shape the child's attitudes to-

ward himself and others, his concept of values, his ideas of right and wrong, his relationship and attitude toward authority, his motivations, his goals and his strivings, his experiences and their meaning for him—all things that are culturally determined.

Everyone in this country is influenced in varying degrees by the dominant American way of life. The importance of the individual, the role of government in relation to its people, the competition basic to the free enterprise system, are elements of our broad cultural heritage. Within this broad outline many variations exist which reflect differences between geographical regions, farm and city life, economic and social classes, religions, nationalities, and Negroes and whites. Cultural differences in the last instance are related in large measure to the historical relationship between Negroes and whites in this country. Scientific studies show that very little of the American Negroes' African heritage has survived.

The significance of cultural influences on the development of personality is of great importance to child welfare workers and to all social workers. Like everyone else, child welfare workers are creatures of their own cultural heritage. Their values, their standards, and their evaluation of situations are all influenced by their own experiences, their own values, their own standards. Child welfare workers must recognize this and understand what they bring from their own cultural background and how this may color their work with the child and his parents.

Knowledge of cultural influences is important in understanding the child, his parents, and the total family situation. The child welfare worker must be able to understand and accept the fact when the parents and the child have standards, values, and behavior that differ from his own. He must see that these have meaning and significance for the individual and may be just as consistent in terms of his culture as the worker's behavior, attitudes, and values are consistent with his culture. This awareness and understanding of cultural background also leads to an appreciation of the values and benefits to the child and his parents of culturally determined behavior—behavior which is in keeping with the realities of their lives. It fosters respect for people whose way of life, although differing from the worker's, has meaning and value for them. It also helps the worker to understand that his way of living is not the ***only*** way nor the ***right*** way for ***all*** people.

This understanding is basic to the child welfare worker's evaluation, diagnosis, and formulation of casework treatment. He must be able to recognize when the behavior of the child is culturally consistent and when it is the expression of emotional difficulties. On the basis of his comparative studies of slum and middle-class children, Allison Davis

points out that behavior which middle-class teachers or social workers often regard as "'delinquent' or 'hostile,' or 'nonmotivated' in slum children is usually a perfectly realistic, adaptive, and—in slum life—socially acceptable response to reality." [5]

One of the dangers growing out of an attempt to understand the cultural background of people is the tendency to think in a stereotyped way of groups of people with whom we have had no contact, or who are different from ourselves. Sometimes, too, we tend to judge individual behavior on the basis of the over-all cultural pattern of the group. We may falsely assume that all southerners, or all rural people, or all Pennsylvania Dutch, or all Chinese people react the same way.

Variations in the over-all cultural pattern are found in all groups, of course. In considering cultural influences the fact of greatest significance is that each individual is influenced by what and how the over-all cultural pattern has been transmitted to him within his family; how his experiences have been organized within himself; and the unique meaning these experiences have for him. For example: A child welfare worker was disturbed about the lack of contact the children in a Creole family with whom she was working had with other children in the neighborhood. The family stayed entirely to themselves and the mother permitted the children no friendly interchange with neighbors or schoolmates.

The family had moved into the community from another State. Since this was the worker's first contact with a Creole family, he set about to study the ways and habits of the Creole group. On the basis of what he learned, he interpreted the mother's behavior in this way. In this State Creoles stay within their own group because they are not accepted by white people and do not wish to be identified with the Negro group. The pattern of segregation in the city to which they had moved forced the family to live in a Negro community and the children to attend the school for Negro children. In evaluating the situation, the child welfare worker reasoned that the mother's behavior was consistent with her cultural background and this explained her own inability to form relationships in the community or to permit her children to do so. Yet, this isolation was having disastrous effect upon the children. But were these facts alone enough to make the child welfare worker's evaluation of the mother's behavior valid? To answer this question, we would need to know more about this mother as a person before we could determine whether or not her behavior was culturally determined or whether it was an ex-

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[5] Davis, Allison: Socio-Economic Influences Upon Children's Learning. In Proceedings of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, Raleigh, North Carolina: Health Publications Institute, 1951. 363 pp. (p. 11–33).

pression of her own emotional conflicts. Perhaps there might even be elements of both involved.

One other caution is necessary here. Culture is not static. Cultural patterns change as people come in contact with other people and as external forces such as scientific and technological developments, economic conditions, and other factors, affect the way of living.

In actual fact, in this country for several generations, we have been experiencing a rapidly changing cultural pattern. Consciously and unconsciously, the habits, thoughts, ways of behaving of each individual in this country are being affected to more or less degree. Take just one example, the changing status of women and observe how this has affected the organization of the family, the status of men, attitudes toward women who work outside of the home, plans for care and rearing of children, performance of household tasks, preparation of food.

The fact that cultural patterns change also has great significance for child welfare workers. This change is evidence of the universal adaptability of human nature. Too much stress on the significance and value of varying cultural patterns for the individual may lead to the conclusion that culturally determined behavior should never be interfered with. This, in turn, may provide child welfare workers with a rational means of escape from their responsibility to deal effectively with some situations with which they are confronted. The Creole mother referred to above furnishes an excellent example. Although the children were evidently being damaged by denial of their basic human need for companionship with other children, the child welfare worker might have excused herself from the responsibility for providing help to this mother on the basis that the situation grew out of the cultural pattern of these people, and therefore should not be disturbed. We must recognize that when old patterns of behavior are giving way to new ones, or when people of one cultural group come in close contact with those in another, the problem of readjustment, of regaining a sense of confidence and security are frequently difficult and distressing for the individual.

When confronted with these situations, child welfare workers have a responsibility to give skillful and understanding help to the child and his parents. The Creole mother, like her children, was undoubtedly deeply affected by being uprooted from the security of her own home and from people of her own way of thinking and behaving. Being forced to identify herself with a group with whom she had no identification, undoubtedly presented an obstacle to her own adjustment. Skilled casework service based on an understanding of the mother's cultural background and the meaning of her experiences

to her might help her reach a solution to the problem that would bring happiness and satisfaction to both her children and herself.

Culturally determined behavior like that of the "slum" children for example, although it may serve a specific purpose within the group, may be devastating to the child's adjustment and happiness outside the group. And adjustment to the larger group is vital because the child's school, work, and other experiences inevitably bring him into contact with the larger community. The larger community also becomes part of the child's cultural environment—widening his experiences and influencing his development. Through a sustained, understanding, and purposeful relationship with a child welfare worker with adequate community resources at his command, the child's values and standards of conduct may change and his energies and desires be directed in activities that have constructive values for him and for the community.

Community Resources and Facilities Are Needed

SOCIAL SERVICES are not magic. They cannot meet all of the ills that beset troubled children. However adequate they may be, social services cannot be effective unless services in other fields are supplied as needed.

Casework services will avail little if the child's or his parents' health is not safeguarded through adequate public health measures and good medical care, including dental services. For many children and their parents, problems are so deep-seated that casework services are not effective. Unless psychiatric services are sufficiently available for the children and their parents who need them, they must go without needed care. Some of these children end up before the courts and in institutions for delinquents. For some, this is the beginning of

an adult life of delinquency and crime. For many others lack of psychiatric care of these deep-seated problems means frustration, fearfulness, and unhappiness for themselves and others—tragic enough if limited to one generation but even more tragic because these are so often passed on to on-coming generations. Psychiatric and psychological services are also often needed to help the child welfare worker understand the basis of the child's difficulty and his potentialities. Without this help it is often difficult to know how to direct casework service.

Social casework services can avail little when a child belongs to a family lacking sufficient income to provide a standard of living that promotes health and decency. Nor can social services be effective unless there are adequate day-care facilities, good school programs, including nursery schools, opportunities for sound recreational outlets and leisure-time pursuits, vocational guidance and training, and religious programs. Not only children under the care of child welfare agencies need these opportunities but so do all the children in the community. If social services for children are to be effective, they must be an integral part of a mosaic of community services.

Developing Social Services and Resources for Children Living in Their Own Homes

WHEN THE TOTAL JOB of strengthening and safeguarding family living for children is considered, it can be readily seen that this is not the responsibility of any one agency. Important as the development of good social services may be, they can become truly effective only as a community simultaneously improves general social, economic, educational, recreational, and health services. It may not be possible for one agency to provide all of the services for children living in their own homes that are described in this bulletin. Also it may not be possible for the community to develop all of these services at one time. To develop a broad program of social services for children living in their own homes, and the resources needed re-

quires broad planning and the involvement of many agencies and citizens representing a variety of community interests and groups.

When planning to develop such a program, the community must first determine the needs of these children and their families, the resources that are available, those that should be available to enhance and strengthen family life and to meet the individual needs of children and parents, and the community hazards to stable family living. On the basis of these facts, the community determines priorities and arrives at a plan for action. Decisions must then be made in regard to what agencies will assume responsibility for the social services that are to be developed. Can existing agencies extend their programs to include the new services? Is staff sufficient in number and competence? Will this require reorganization of programs and services? Are agencies ready and willing to look at their programs in terms of the present need and reorganize them on this basis?

Some child welfare agencies may not be in a position, or may not consider it their function to provide some of the services described here, such as family life and parent education. Through community planning child welfare agencies, however, may be able to stimulate the development of these programs through the appropriate agency in the community. The development of such needed resources as day-care centers and nursery schools can be achieved through community planning and action. Where these exist but lack social services, stimulation can be given by the child welfare agency in developing social services within the day-care or nursery-school program or a plan can be made whereby these services are provided by other social agencies. The provision of adequate social services to juvenile courts may need to be developed in some communities on this same basis.

Civic leaders and community groups must recognize the need for mental-health services and, through organized effort, develop these vital resources for children. When citizens understand the other lacks in the community, such as good recreational and leisure-time programs, housing, adequate general assistance programs and public assistance grants, and good schools, they will act.

Individuals within a community have an interest in what happens to children. When they participate in study and planning, understanding becomes widespread and constructive action is promoted. Agencies in the child welfare field must join hands with others and at times furnish the leadership to develop interest and to draw people into planning, study, and action for children.

Coordination of services should receive major emphasis. Such coordination requires not only clearly defined procedures between agencies for referral of children but methods through which the representatives of the various agencies having responsibility in relation to a specific child will sit down together to arrive at a mutual understanding of the factors contributing to the child's difficulty. Through such cooperative planning, services of the various agencies can be given to the child as related parts of a total plan instead of on a segmented basis.

Planning to develop social services, other resources, and programs for children living in their own homes will vary from community to community. By community is meant the most feasible geographical area close to where children live.

Social Services to Children in Their Own Homes Are Skilled Services

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL are required to provide adequately for the social services described here. Safeguards have been set up in protecting the physical health of people. Physicians must meet definite requirements for professional training and skill before they are permitted to practice. But no such safeguards have been established to protect the social welfare of people. If people are to be helped, the social caseworker, the social group worker, or the community organizer must have the professional knowledge and skills as well as the personal qualifications that are essential to working with people.

A special responsibility is placed on administrators of social welfare programs because of the lack of these safeguards. Administrators and the community must understand the nature of children's difficulties and what is required if their needs are to be met adequately.

A conviction about the need for professionally trained and skilled staff must permeate the total agency structure.

In public child welfare programs, the provision for educational leave offers an opportunity for staff to acquire professional training. Most of the States and Territories provide opportunities for child-welfare workers to secure professional training through educational leave programs. These opportunities should be utilized to the fullest extent by the States and Territories. Many voluntary agencies also have scholarship and educational leave programs that help to improve the competence of their staff. These programs also should have wider support and be developed by more voluntary agencies.

In the child welfare programs throughout the country, staff with varying degrees of professional training and skill are providing social services to children. Because this is true, the services that can be provided by workers who have had no training, by those with partial training, and by those who have full training but lack experience must be determined. Services must then be geared to the competence of staff and the fact accepted that many children cannot be given the social services they need because staff is not equipped to provide them. Whatever the competence of staff, adequate supervision is the cornerstone of good social services.

If a yardstick of accomplishment can be set up of what can be expected from staff whether untrained, partially trained, or fully trained, but under good supervision, the services that the agency is able to provide will be known. What is happening to children and families under agency care as well as the unmet needs and the ways of meeting them will be equally well known.

In addition to administrative conviction as to the need for qualified staff, an administrative structure through which services can flow must be established. Is the child welfare worker going through the motions of carrying out prescribed routines, or is he seeking to release the child's energy to achieve a fuller, more satisfying life? Does the agency support the worker in sound decisions, or is he defeated by pressure from influential sources in the community? Is it possible for staff members to make use of their maximum capacities? In short, is the whole administrative structure—policies, rules, and regulations—geared to the needs of the people who are being served? Without a real conviction on the part of administrators, supervisors, and child welfare workers that social services for children living in their own homes are opportunities for children and their parents to realize their fullest potentialities, professional training, skills, and techniques become meaningless.

Source of Responsibility for Social Services to Children Living in Their Own Homes

IN ORDER TO MOVE with sureness and conviction in providing social services to children living in their own homes, the authority to assume this responsibility must be clearly delegated by law to public child welfare agencies or through community assent as expressed in the articles of incorporation of voluntary children's agencies. Legislation should define the services to be provided and the responsibility of the public child welfare agency in providing the services must be stated in specific terms. Legislation that is couched in too vague terms, is often defeated by narrow interpretation. The power to act must be clear. For example, if an agency is given responsibility for the care of children who are neglected and abused, it must also have the responsibility to investigate complaints of neglect, to offer casework services to the parents, to determine the plan of care, and to file petitions in court in those instances where parents cannot or will not improve the conditions surrounding the child.

In some instances, because of lack of qualified staff, the public child welfare agency may not be in the position to provide all of the services for which it has legal responsibility. Or if some other social agency in the community is adequately providing the service, the public agency should not duplicate it. However provided, the goal should be that social services are available for children in the community living in their own homes who are in need of such services.

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Time is too short and national needs are too pressing to permit the loss of the potentialities of even one child—potentialities for public service, leadership, statesmanship, citizenship, science, the arts. For the safety and security of all of us, all children must have opportunities through which they grow to be clear thinking and responsible citizens. If a single child is lost, America is the less.

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